

# VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

Britain's Premier ASL Journal

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THE CAR THAT 'ATED BLACKPOOL - HEROES 2023 tournament report

CRUSADERS LADDER - updated

MAKING IT TO THE TOP - tips to become a better player

TESTING SOME MMP DICE - how balanced are the MMP dice?

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**COVER:** A posed photo of British paratroopers moving through a shell-damaged house in Oosterbeek, 23 September 1944.

*VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES* is the quad-monthly British *ASL* journal. All comments are welcome. Even better, contribute. Write an article. Design a scenario. Share your *ASL* experiences with others. *VFTT* allows you to communicate with other *ASL*ers. Don't be a silent voice.

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All issue of *VFTT* can be downloaded for free from:  
<https://www.vftt.co.uk/vfttpdfs.asp>

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# PREP FIRE

Hello and welcome to the latest issue of *VFTT*.

Like the last issue, you'll find a mixed bag of material, including the second part of Craig Benn's article by on the French paratroopers during the Indo-China War. For those of you who might like to try and challenge for top spot at tournaments Jim Bishop offers some advice on how to improve your *ASL* play. And for those of you blaming your dice for your poor play Ken Walsh takes a look at the balance of the MMP dice.

I'm still on the lookout for material for future issues of *VFTT*. With over 8,000 scenarios, dozens of CG and hundreds of rules chapters there's plenty of topics still to write about, so why not give it a go? Even if it's only a page or two, it all helps keep *VFTT* going.

'Til next issue, roll Low and Prosper.

Pete Phillipps



## UK STOCKISTS OF ASL PRODUCTS

**LEISURE GAMES**, 100 Ballards Lane, Finchley, London, N3 2DN. Telephone (020) 8346 2327, e-mail them at [shop@leisuregames.com](mailto:shop@leisuregames.com) or go to [www.leisuregames.com](http://www.leisuregames.com).

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If you know of other shops stocking third party *ASL* products let me know so I can include them here in future issues.

# INCOMING



## MMP READY SPARROWS

Having released *Drop Zone: Sainte-Mère-Église*, a HASL module covering the battles around the town of Sainte-Mère-Église during the first two days of D-Day at the start of the year, MMP placed *ASL Journal 14* on pre-order at the start of March. Subtitled *Aussie Special Edition* the centrepiece of this 56 page issue will be *Sparrowforce*, a HASL CG covering the battle between Australian and Japanese forces for the village of Babau on the island of Timor in 1942. There will also be 24 scenarios included, and an assortment of articles, with several focusing on *Hatten in Flame*. It is available to pre-order for \$51.00 and will retail for \$68.00.

Several other new modules are expected to be made available later in the year for pre-order, including the Marco Polo Bridge HASL, the Ponyri HASL, and *Contested Lands* (a HASL set during the

1948 Arab-Israeli conflict), while a reprint of *Armies of Oblivion* should also be placed on pre-order. MMP are also working on a reprint of *Solitaire ASL*, though no date has been announced for a possible release.

Also expected to be placed on pre-order in 2023 is *Twilight of the Reich*, a boxed module covering late-war urban fighting in locations such as Budapest, Czechoslovakia and Berlin. Although there are no details on how many scenarios it will include, it is likely to contain at least one countersheet containing a (non-black) German SS OB, four double-wide boards, and new railroad and graveyard overlays.

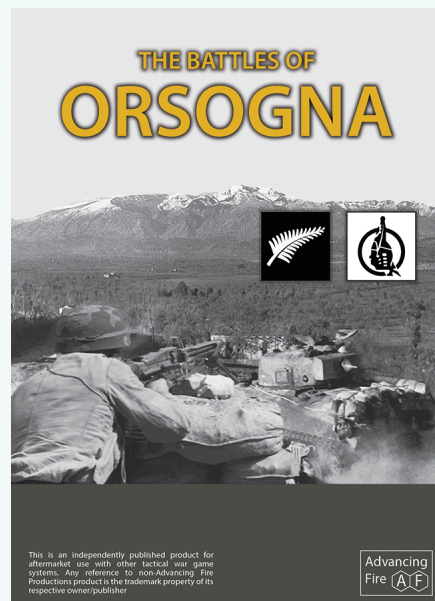
## ADVANCING TO ORSOGNA

Advancing Fire continue to work on their Orsogna module, which depicts the actions of the 2nd New Zealand Division to take the village of Orsogna in Italy, in December 1943. There will be 11 scenarios and a CG set on the six historical mapsheets. It will also include 130 1/2" and 130 5/8" counters, and rules pages covering map terrain and the Orsogna CG.

## BEST BUNKER

*Best of the Bunker!* is a new release from the producers of *Dispatched from the Bunker*. It contains 20 scenarios from issues of *DftB* with a revised layout and new counter graphics supplied by Broken Ground Design. It is available for \$40.00 from <https://yankeeamsl.com/index.php/product/the-best-of-the-bunker>.

*DftB 55* was also recently released and contains four new scenarios. 'Take and Hold' is a tournament-sized PTO action taking place on the Philippines in



December 1944, while 'Ma'qil Melee' takes place in Iraq in May 1941. 'Ozerki' takes place during the battle of Kursk. The final scenario, 'Rock of Chickamauga', sees American and North Korean forces clash in July 1950. The latter scenario is supported by the second part of a primer on the Korean War rules section.

A four issue subscription is \$20.00 (\$18.00 if renewing an existing subscription), while a 'Digital The WORKS' order containing PDFs of all prior issues plus a subscription is \$75.00. You can pay by PayPal to [PinkFloydFan1954@aol.com](mailto:PinkFloydFan1954@aol.com) or by sending a cheque/money order payable to Vic Provost to Vic Provost, Dispatches, 20 King St, Pittsfield MA 01201. If you wish to contact them they can be emailed at [aslbunker@aol.com](mailto:aslbunker@aol.com).

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20 Scenarios from Dispatches from the Bunker

**DB057 THE BLOODY TOROKINA PERIMETER** Dispatches from the Bunker Scenario # DB057

Left-Center of Torokina Marine General Geige defense was 11,000 yds island, with the highest peaks prepared for the incoming IJA moved to the attack in support. General M...

**VICTORY CONDITIONS:** win at Game End if score Exit VP normal (NAJ) for exiting off also score 5 VP for Pillbox at Game End

**BALANCE:**  
 Japanese: Add a Pre-registered hex to the 70mm OBA.  
 American: Add a 3rd Pre-registered hex to the 60mm OBA and substitute 1 HMG for 1 MMG.

**CONDITIONS:**  
 American Sets Up First  
 Japanese Moves First  
 Prisoners are off the South Edge score 5 VP for each destroyed Pillbox at

**BALANCE:**  
 Japanese: Add a Pre-registered Hex to the 70mm OBA.  
 American: Add a Third Pre-registered hex to the 60mm OBA and substitute 1 HMG for 1 MMG.

Elements of the 2nd Battalion, 129th Infantry, 37th Division

ELR: 4  
 SAN: 4

HQ Platoon Enter Turn 3 on South Edge:

2	3	4	5	6	7	8	END
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# The Car That 'ated Blackpool

## HEREOS 2023 Tournament Report

Wednesday saw me, John Martin, Rod Lobban and Alan Hume drive down to Blackpool in John's car. Well that was the plan. Unfortunately Alan's car broke down the day before and had to collect the repaired vehicle from the garage on the Wednesday so he couldn't travel down with us.

One emergency train ticket booking later that Tuesday evening and he was booked on a train for Thursday morning from Edinburgh so he could still come down. Why train and not repaired car? Well Alan's only recently resumed driving again after 20 years of not owning a car and still feels rusty and not up to motorway driving

Anyway, John, Rob and myself had an otherwise uneventful journey on Wednesday morning and arrived just before 2pm, and found several early arrivals already busy playing *ASL*.

Although I had plenty of opportunities to play throughout the weekend, in some respects I've lost interest in playing *ASL* at tournaments and get more enjoyment out of the socialising nowadays. No, that doesn't mean I spend the entire weekend drinking (well, I do, but not like I did back in the good old days!) but the enjoyment of the weekend comes from catching up with everyone.

I suspect it's a side effect of Covid, having been locked down for so long makes you release how much the social side of gaming means, especially in a tournament/convention setting.

I did manage a couple of games though, the first being a game of 'SP240 Quiet Desperation' against tournament newcomer Mark Finney. The other was 'J2023 Death at the Cement Plant' from the recently released *ASL Journal 13*, which had caught my eye as it looked quite interesting and seemed like a possible candidate for HEORES 2024 (see, I do think ahead and don't just make it up at the last minute!) I played Joe Arthur, who was looking for a game on Friday afternoon after being beaten by Mark Blackmore in the opening round of the tournament. Joe ended up defending with the Russians and set up most of his forces in the Cement Plant, with a light screen of forces on the Russian front line.

After seeing Joe's setup, my initial thought was that the scenario looked quite tough for the attacking Germans, with lots of Open Ground to cross to get to the Cement Plant. Yet Joe felt the scenario would be tough for the Russians, so one of us had to be wrong! Joe had set up the Russian MG kill stack on L2 of the Cement Plant, so I set up a pair of German MG kill stacks 10-12 hexes away to take it out in my first Prep Fire, while the rest of my force, including the engineers supported by the StuGs, hit his screening force. This turned out to be mostly dummies or conscripts and collapsed very quickly. Joe then made what I felt was a mistake of not routing everyone back to the Cement Plant, allowing me to grab them as Prisoners during my GT2 and depriving him of valuable troops to help defend the Cement Plant.

Use of Smoke from the StuGs helped cover the approach across the Open Ground, and aggressive movement allowed me to

be in position across the road from the Cement Plant by GT4. By the end of the turn I was in the plant, and also had troops in the wooden building behind it, allowing me to stop his reinforcements from rushing into the plant to help the few remaining defenders. With his forces inside the plant rapidly collapsing, Joe surrendered before I could take the majority of them Prisoners.

Afterwards Joe still felt the scenario was tough for the Russians, though ROAR currently has it 14-6 in their favour, so what does he know :-)

The tournament saw 16 players take part, with Craig Benn and Mark Blackmore being randomly drawn against each other in the semi-final yet again! I think in future we'll skip the draw and just pair them up to save time. Craig won, and went on to beat Dave Ramsey in the final.

I also ran an *ASLSK* tournament as a couple of players had expressed an interest in one prior to the weekend. With four players taking part this was a simple round robin affair with everyone playing everyone else in the group, with two games on Saturday and one on Sunday. As I lack familiarity with *ASLSK* I did not select scenarios for each round, allowing the players to pick what they wanted to play. David Turpin beat Rod Lobban, Bill Finlayson and John Turpin to win the group outright. If the interest remains then expect a similar event to take place at HEROES 2024.

### PLAYER RESULTS

PLAYER	P	W	L
Ian Ainsworth	6	3	3
Joe Arthur	9	6	3
Andy Bagley	7	4	3
Craig Benn	5	5	0
Mark Blackmore	7	6	1
David Blackwood	7	1	6
Peter Burbery	4	1	3
Michael Davies	1	0	1
Bill Durrant	2	1	1
Matthew Ellis	6	3	3
Bill Finlayson	3	1	2
Mark Finney	1	0	1
Tony Gibson	3	1	2
Russell Gough	2	1	1
Alan Hume	1	1	0
Paul Legg	6	1	5
Rod Lobban	5	1	4
John Martin	4	3	1
Ian Morris	6	3	3
Gary Norman	3	1	2
Pete Phillipps	2	2	0
Toby Pilling	1	1	0
David Ramsey	4	3	1
Nick Ranson	5	0	5
Ulric Schwela	1	0	1
Simon Staniforth	4	3	1
John Tait	7	2	5
David Turpin	3	3	0
John Turpin	3	1	2
Richard Webb	4	2	2



Ian Morris (standing) and Ian Pollard discuss *ASL* tactics. Or beer. Probably both.....

### THE SCENARIOS

SCENARIO	ALLIED	AXIS
AP164 Sparrow Force	4	3
AP171 Possi's Posse	0	2
AP34 Bocage Blockage	0	1
AP4 L'Abbaye Blanche	1	0
BFP-23 Prelim to Death Night	1	0
BFP-84 Kreida Station	4	1
BFP-87 Fork in the Road	1	2
DB169 Sternebeck's Sortie	4	0
FT KGS9 Lost in a Day	0	1
FT152 Avanti!	0	1
G30 Morgan's Stand	3	2
ITR-2 Factory In Flix	1	0
J130 The Art of Dying	1	0
J176 Deadly Assumption	0	1
J188 Grab and Go	1	1
J198 The Valley of Glory	0	1
J200 One Story Town	0	2
J203 Death at the Cement Plant	0	2
J208 Panzerpioniere!	0	1
J211 Breakthrough in the Arctic	1	0
Q16 Defence of St. Oedenrode	0	1
Q9 Long Day of Confusion	0	1
S19 Purple Heart Lane	0	2
S49 Cooks, Clerks, and Bazookas	2	1
S86 Going Commando	1	1
SP141 Broken Beek	5	0
SP24 Forest Fighting in Latvia	0	1
SP240 Quiet Desperation	0	1
WO37 The Vital Hours	0	1
YASL#7 Making a Break for It	1	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>31 30</b>

As usual at HEROES I paid a visit to The Tache, the local rock club on Saturday night. When I headed there on Saturday night (well 2am Sunday morning!) my taxi went past The Manchester bar which is two miles up the road from the hotel. It was cordoned off as there'd been a brawl between footie fans on Saturday evening and one man has been stabbed and left critically injured – it was reported on Monday that he had died (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-64861231>).

To end on a positive note, I'd like to say a special thanks to everyone who chipped in to the collection I held towards Alan's car repair costs. He really appreciated the gesture, and the £150 helped reduce the anxiety he was feeling about paying for it. Alan has a habit of donating to help others even when he can't really afford it, so it was nice to see him benefit from the help of others for a change.

## TOURNAMENT RESULTS

POS.	PLAYER	P	W	L	CRUS
1	Craig Benn	4	4	0	0 3361.3
2	Mark Blackmore	4	3	1	0 3135.0
3	David Ramsey	4	3	1	0 3083.3
4	Simon Staniforth	4	3	1	0 3038.3
5	Matthew Ellis	4	3	1	0 2763.3
6	Joe Arthur	4	2	2	0 2865.0
7	Andy Bagley	4	2	2	0 2812.5
8	Ian Ainsworth	4	2	2	0 2770.0
9	John Tait	4	1	3	0 3355.0
10	Paul Legg	4	1	3	0 3355.0
11	David Blackwood	4	1	3	0 3310.0
12	Nick Ranson	4	0	4	0 No Wins
13	Ian Morris	3	1	2	0 2785.0
14	Peter Burbery	3	1	2	0 2085.0
15	Richard Webb	3	1	2	0 2085.0
16	Tony Gibson	3	1	2	0 2085.0

The CRUS column is the average Crusader Ladder rating of the opponents beaten.

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ABOVE: Tournament Champion Craig Benn.

BELOW: Dave Ramsey receives the runner-up trophy.



TOP: Some actual gaming featuring John Martin (left) and Rod Lobhan (right).

ABOVE: Mark Blackmore pointing out something to Simon Staniforth, Ian Morris, Dave Blackwood and John Tait.

BELOW: Joe Arthur, Dave Ramsey, and Paul Legg relaxing on Saturday night.



# The Crusaders

## Open ASL Tournament Ladder

### HEROES 2023 Update

This is a list of all active players (IE those who have attended a UK ASL tournament in the last two years).

The full ladder can be viewed on the VFTT website at

<https://www.vftt.co.uk/ukladder.asp?type=full>

Rank	Player	P	(W-D-L)	Pts	Rank	Player	P	(W-D-L)	Pts
1	Toby Pilling	94	85-2-7	4005	31=	Russell Gough	91	47-4-40	2910
2	Craig Benn	168	132-0-36	3925	31=	Mark Finney	1	0-0-1	2910
3	Mark Blackmore	158	123-0-35	3875	33	John Tait	26	10-1-15	2900
4	Martin Vicca	75	54-1-20	3685	34	Rod Lobban	3	1-0-2	2895
5	Gerard Burton	184	109-5-70	3540	35	Peter Catchpole	17	7-3-7	2890
6	David Ramsey	109	63-0-46	3475	36	Bill Durrant	11	6-0-5	2870
7	Michael Davies	133	75-1-57	3425	37	Josh Kalman	13	6-1-6	2865
8	Jim Bishop	9	6-0-3	3400	38=	Neil Stevens	84	34-2-48	2860
9	Simon Staniforth	156	92-1-63	3320	38=	Mike Bingham	2	0-0-2	2860
10	Michael Urquhart	7	5-0-2	3265	40	John Martin	20	7-0-13	2850
11	Joe Arthur	143	79-3-61	3255	41	Daniel Kalman	17	9-1-7	2835
12	Ian Ainsworth	61	36-0-25	3235	42=	Ulric Schwela	73	32-3-38	2825
13	Andy Bagley	61	29-1-31	3200	42=	Alan Hume	5	1-0-4	2825
14	Martin Barker	49	24-1-24	3135	44	Steve Cook	59	23-1-35	2815
15=	Ian Morris	151	87-2-62	3130	45	Ian Pollard	207	84-1-122	2810
15=	William Binns	112	57-1-54	3130	46	Morris Legge	16	6-0-10	2805
17	Tony Gibson	59	30-0-29	3090	47=	John Kennedy	42	12-0-30	2800
18	Mick Allen	48	28-0-20	3085	47=	Richard Webb	11	4-0-7	2800
19	David Turpin	14	9-0-5	3065	49	David Blackwood	142	56-0-86	2780
20	Matthew Ellis	68	34-1-33	3025	50	James Short	34	10-0-24	2750
21	Christopher Blair	1	1-0-0	3015	51	Alex Ashton	8	2-0-6	2745
22	Eoin Corrigan	3	1-0-2	3010	52	Stuart Brant	84	29-1-54	2740
23	Stefano Cuccurullo	29	13-0-16	2985	53	Frazer Greenshields	9	4-1-4	2735
24	Neil Brunger	97	35-0-62	2980	54	Joel Ayres	11	4-0-7	2720
25=	Pete Phillipps	284	125-0-159	2970	55	Gary Norman	67	25-1-41	2690
25=	Dominic McGrath	208	122-3-83	2970	56	Peter Burbery	22	8-0-14	2670
25=	Magnus Rimvall	40	17-0-23	2970	57	John Turpin	12	3-0-9	2660
28	Kris Koch	11	4-0-7	2930	58	Tim Hundsdorfer	32	13-0-19	2490
29	Paul Legg	306	123-4-179	2925	59	Nigel Blair	300	105-1-194	2420
30	Eric Gerstenberg	36	18-1-17	2920	60	Nick Ranson	152	23-2-127	2060



# Testing some MMP dice

Ken Walsh

This was posted to the GameSquad ASL Forum by Ken (<http://www.gamesquad.com/forums/index.php?threads/testing-some-mmp-dice.182804/>) and is reprinted here with his permission – Pete

During a recent thread on GameSquad on precision dice the question came up, “well, so how bad are the dice MMP gives us?” Some data was provided from one pair of dice that looked fine, but as combined data (i.e. showed the sum of the dice) it potentially masks bias in one die in the pair.

So, because apparently I had nothing better to spend my short time on Earth pursuing, I decided to test the MMP dice that I have. I’ve got eight dice from MMP: four from *BV*, two from *ASLSK1* and two from *ASLSK3*.

## Summary for those whose eyes glaze over when confronted by a mass of math

Of the eight dice I found one that was very probably biased (99% confidence after 2,000 rolls) and the bias matched a dimensional flaw in the die. This bias did not impact the average roll at all since opposite sides of a D6 always sum to seven, but it did mean that a pair of faces came up a bit more often than it should which could affect things like ROF and such. The other seven dice were tested to either 1,000 rolls or 2,000 rolls and did not show any likelihood of being biased.

**A decade ago, I tested Battleschool’s precision dice and while I was doing that, I tested one MMP die. The Battleschool dice passed the test, the MMP die turned out to be unbalanced; however, life is too short to waste too much time worry about this stuff.**

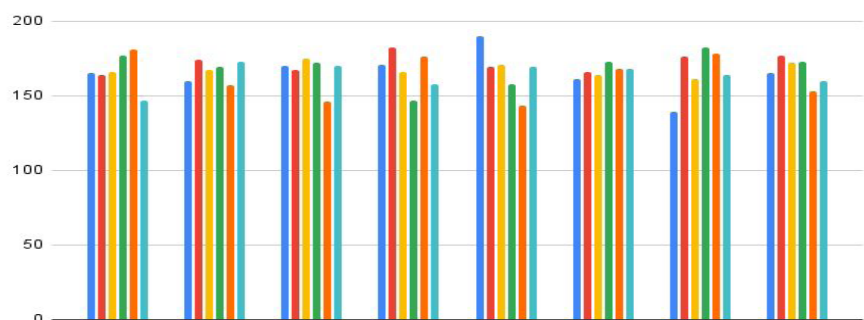
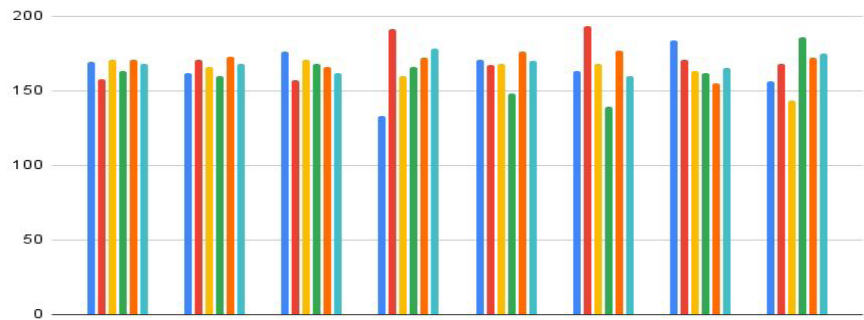
**Mark Pitcavage**

(quoted from <https://www.desperationmorale.com/2012/01/16/balance-testing-the-battleschool-precision-dice/>)

## Onwards

But before diving into any details, I would first like to provide some context on just how variable dice are, even when you roll them 1,000 times. I find visualization is often easier for folks to digest than abstract numbers, so here are some plotted dice histograms:

Each of the five plots shows the histograms of eight different dice each rolled 1,000 times. Each group of colored bars represents a single die (e.g. the blue bar is





	R1	W1	R2	W2	R3	W3	B	K
1	162	159	151	177	173	156	171	165
2	165	193	164	140	161	201	165	170
3	163	147	171	160	167	147	174	155
4	157	150	164	172	151	162	150	179
5	169	198	188	180	157	160	173	174
6	184	153	162	171	191	174	167	157
Prob Fair	76%	1%	48%	26%	30%	6%	80%	75%
Total	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Avg	3.56	3.49	3.56	3.55	3.53	3.49	3.49	3.50
1-6 Width	465	475	466	467.5	466	466	468	465
2-5 Width	465	465	462	465	456.5	468	465	467
3-4 Width	469.5	476	465.5	466	466	467.5	469	471
Width Range	4.5	11	4	2.5	9.5	2	4	6

Table 1: MMP Dice Tested

how often 1 came up for that die, the red 2, the yellow 3 and so forth). We are looking at 40 different dice here (eight per plot). Take a moment to look at them and decide how random or “fair” you think they may or may not be.

Now the challenge: One of these five plots are actual rolls of my eight different MMP provided dice. Four of the five plots are “virtual” dice taken from random.org which is just about as perfectly random as something can get within reason (i.e. vastly better than any physical die you could ever manufacture). Can you figure out which of the five plots came from the “cheap” MMP dice?

The answer will be discussed further on, but you can of course pause here and decide what you think before reading on for the eventual answer.

## MMP Dice Testing Results and Analysis

### 12,000 drs - All the fun of corner clipping with none of the satisfaction!

I rolled all eight of my MMP provided dice 1,000 times in pairs as my first set of data. I rolled in pairs just to collect data faster, the results were recorded for each die individually without summing the pair of dice together. The results can be seen in table 1.

The columns are labelled with short hand for my dice: R is Red, W is White, B is Blue and K is Black.

The rows 1-6 are how many times that face came up.

“Prob Fair” is the result from Google Sheet’s CHITEST which is an implementation of Pearson’s chi-squared test. Essentially it tells you what is the probability that a perfectly fair die would produce a distribution as “unbalanced” as the die under test. So if the results is say

48% like R2 it means we aren’t suspicious of the die since if we took a perfectly fair die and rolled it 1,000 times there would be about a 1 in 2 chance that we’d get a distribution like what R2 gave us. If, on the other hand, we get a result of 1% like we got for W1 that’s a flag that the die is quite likely unfair (we’d say we are 99% confident it is not a fair die). Something like R3 coming in at 6% is more ambiguous. That seems low, but on the other hand if we rolled eight perfectly fair dice there would be about a 40% chance that one of the eight would come up with a CHITEST as low as 6%. So really, maybe 6% isn’t that low...

“Total” is just a sum of the 1-6 results to double check I didn’t have a data error in my collection.

The “X-Y Width” rows are the width of the die in thousandths of an inch measured from face X to face Y. So “1-6 Width” means I held the die in calipers by the 1 and 6 faces and read off the measurement.

“Width Range” is just the maximum width minus the minimum width to see how asymmetric the die is.

## What can we conclude so far?

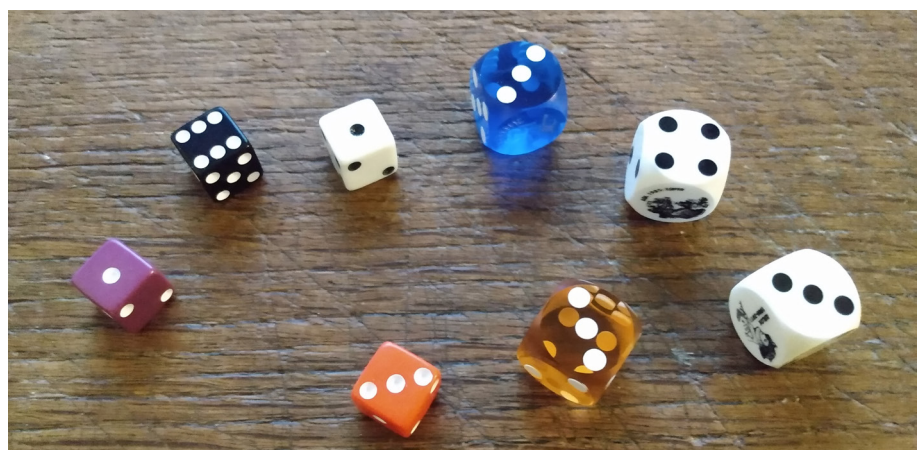
W1 looks awfully suspicious. The

CHITEST is quite low of course, but maybe we just got “unlucky”? Looking at the distribution we see that the 2 and 5 face came up more often than any others. Looking at the width data we also see that the die is asymmetric having been “squashed” about 2.5% in one dimension. In fact, based on how it is squashed we’d expect the die to “tip over” onto the 2 and 5 faces more often than the others and so we’ve got physical measurements that seem to confirm the statistical measurement.

W3 also looks questionable based on a CHITEST of just 6%. Looking at its physical measurements it really is pretty symmetric though. It comes up 2 an awful lot, and 6 is the next highest result. Maybe an internal bubble? Maybe it is just fine and we got a bit “unlucky” in this test?

R3 has a perfectly reasonable CHITEST of 30% but it is nearly as asymmetric as W1. Maybe we got “lucky” and in this 1,000 rolls we’ve “hidden” its bias?

The other five dice are largely unremarkable. Even using a really loose “80% confidence level” (meaning we’d erroneously fail one of every five “perfect” dice) they all pass. The lowest one, W2 is



quite symmetric.

## What can we do next? Roll the dice even more!

Oh what fun, even more drs (well, technically DRs the way I roll them). I went ahead and rolled the pairs W1-R1 and W3-R3 another 1,000 times each. Table 2 shows the results.

Well, W1 still came out looking pretty bad with this 1,000 rolls coming up with a CHITEST of 5%. More importantly, when we combine this 1,000 rolls with the previous 1,000 for a combined 2,000 roll test it ends up looking even more unfair with a CHITEST of less than 0.1%. *Note however that the average of the rolls is perfectly "fair" since on D6 opposite faces always sum to 7.*

W3 has redeemed itself, with the new set of 1,000 rolls coming in with a CHITEST of 61% and when combined with the previous 1,000 rolls still 60%. We just got "unlucky" with that first set of 1,000 rolls.

And look at R3. Even though our measurements seem to indicate it is lopsided it really doesn't seem to affect the outcome

	R1b	W1b	R1b+R1	W1b+W1	R3b	W3b	R3b+R3	W3b+W3
1	153	166	315	325	155	159	328	315
2	173	165	338	358	191	159	352	360
3	162	143	325	290	162	188	329	335
4	161	174	318	324	156	162	307	324
5	182	199	351	397	175	167	332	327
6	169	153	353	306	161	165	352	339
Prob Fair	68%	5%	54%	0%	33%	61%	50%	60%
Total	1000	1000	2000	2000	1000	1000	2000	2000
Avg	3.55	3.53	3.56	3.51	3.49	3.51	3.51	3.50

Table 2: Some More Tests

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8
1	169	162	176	133	171	163	184	156
2	158	171	157	191	167	193	171	168
3	171	166	171	160	168	168	163	143
4	163	160	168	166	148	139	162	186
5	171	173	166	172	176	177	155	172
6	168	168	162	178	170	160	165	175
Prob Fair	98%	98%	93%	4%	73%	8%	71%	23%
Total	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Avg	3.51	3.52	3.48	3.59	3.50	3.45	3.43	3.58
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8
1	165	160	170	171	190	161	139	165
2	164	174	167	182	169	166	176	177
3	166	167	175	166	171	164	161	172
4	177	169	172	147	158	173	182	173
5	181	157	146	176	143	168	178	153
6	147	173	170	158	169	168	164	160
Prob Fair	51%	92%	66%	44%	20%	99%	18%	78%
Total	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Avg	3.49	3.51	3.47	3.45	3.40	3.53	3.58	3.45
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8
1	181	182	174	170	146	164	169	158
2	172	171	158	165	156	160	176	154
3	169	162	168	156	168	162	161	155
4	151	158	177	165	152	168	163	169
5	171	170	164	177	188	177	156	185
6	156	157	159	167	190	169	175	179
Prob Fair	59%	74%	87%	92%	6%	95%	86%	39%
Total	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Avg	3.43	3.43	3.48	3.52	3.65	3.54	3.49	3.61
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8
1	174	178	173	199	158	157	185	159
2	159	155	142	156	160	162	141	160
3	168	150	165	161	174	191	185	157
4	143	161	183	168	160	170	182	174
5	174	194	165	166	170	174	153	186
6	182	162	172	150	178	146	154	164
Prob Fair	33%	15%	34%	12%	83%	21%	4%	58%
Total	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Avg	3.53	3.52	3.54	3.40	3.56	3.48	3.44	3.56

Table 3: "Perfect" Dice



the same way that W1 is. Combined CHITEST is 50%. The die seems quite fair regardless of being a bit “squashed”.

So there we have it, over 12,000 dice rolls on the eight MMP dice and it looks like one of the eight is unbalanced enough we can measure with good statistical confidence. The other seven are essentially indistinguishable from “perfect” dice.

## Perfect Dice

To drive home the point of the results in table 1 let’s look at the CHITEST results for some “perfect” dice. These distributions came from asking random.org to give us drs. It is difficult to get more truly random than random.org, randomness is not just “pseudo-random” but actually derived from measured random atmospheric motion.

Previously we rolled eight MMP dice 1,000 times each. As we’ve already seen one of the dice came up with a low 6% CHITEST that made us wonder about it, but subsequent testing showed it was perfectly fine. Here we run the same “test” of eight “dice” four times using random.org for our “dice” (these are what produced four of the plots in the first post) – the results can be seen in table 3.

## What can we conclude?

Well, the conclusion I draw is that even when rolling 1,000 times there is a lot of expected variation in results and a low CHITEST does not of course mean a die is necessarily unfair. There is always a chance that a “fair” die is going to look “unfair”.

Look at the last group of eight “dice” - three of the dice have a CHITEST of less than 20%. Not too surprisingly out of the 32 dice we ended up with four of them having a CHITEST of less than 10%.

So yeah, even over a huge number of rolls - 1,000 say - you may get the impression that the dice are “unfair” but in reality it is actually quite rare you get a “flat” distribution even over a large set of rolls.

As to the question in the first post - it is the fourth plot that is data from the MMP dice. They sure look like some of the “perfect” dice don’t they? Even though we are fairly sure one of them is “unbalanced”.

## So how bad is that “unbalanced” die?

So we measured pretty confidently that W1 is not a “fair” die. Well, how “unfair” is it?

Again, due to the random nature of things we can only estimate. A simple estimate though is to observe we strongly

suspect that we favorably turn over to the 2 or 5 face more often than we should. We don’t have any motivation to suspect there is any bias beyond that, so our best estimate is to combine all the 2 and 5 results and divide by two and then combine all the 1, 3, 4, and 6 results and divide by 4 to get the estimate of the distribution seen in table 4.

Again, this is only a noisy estimate, but it gives us an idea of how “unfair” the die might be. This die is white, but if we pretend it was red instead we see here that if we had a weapon with a ROF of 1 that we’d get rate about 7% less often than we should. Conversely if we had a ROF of 2 we’d get rate about 7% more often than we should. If we had a ROF of 3 we’d get rate just as often as we should. Or substitute in a smoke exponent, OBA accuracy dr or such. Of course we would also roll a 6 about 7% less than expected and thus be less likely to eliminate that HMG we were trying to repair. Cuts both ways.

And what about the overall DR when we roll this “unfair” die as a pair? Well, in the first 1,000 roll test of W1 and R1 the CHITEST of their sum was 92% - in other words looked quite fair. This is the typical result of combining results. An unbalanced die has much more of an impact on a “dr”

	W1	Perfect	Increase/Decrease
1	15.6%	16.7%	-7%
2	18.9%	16.7%	13%
3	15.6%	16.7%	-7%
4	15.6%	16.7%	-7%
5	18.9%	16.7%	13%
6	15.6%	16.7%	-7%

Table 4: How Unfair are the Dice?

than it has on a “DR”. In fact putting two “unfair” dice together often still results in a fair “DR”. There’s a whole theorem called the “central limit theorem” about this too!

Alright, that was some excruciating detail about the little bits of plastic that came in the box! Clearly I have been putting my short time on this Earth to good use... Honestly, I came up with a way to roll and record the dice quite quickly so this wasn’t as awful as it probably seems.

If anyone actually bothered to make it through this whole mess and has questions I’m happy to answer! Or if you see something that looks wrong I’d love to know that too.

Ω



These are some screenshots from *Second Front*, a tactical WWII turn-based strategy game which bares an uncanny resemblance to *ASL*. Developed by Hexdraw and published by MicroProse Software, it was released on Steam at the end of January. It includes 48 scenarios featuring over 40 types of infantry and 216 tanks, vehicles and guns, and also allows users to create and share their own scenarios and maps. It can be downloaded from [https://store.steampowered.com/app/1148490/Second\\_Front/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/1148490/Second_Front/)

# Making it to the Top

## What Separates the Good Players from the Merely Average

Jim Bishop

Taken from Jim's blog at <https://jekl.com/2021/12/20/making-it-to-the-top-what-separates-the-good-players-from-the-merely-average/> and reprinted here with his permission – Pete

First, this article is perhaps a little presumptuous of me. For starters, I am not sure I am anything more than merely average myself. Writing an article about what separates me from good to great players makes it seem as if I should have a clear path to improvement. It immediately begs the question “what’s holding you back?”. Perhaps I will write about that in a future article because I am pretty sure I know what holds me back. For now, let’s accept that I have played a lot of great players from around the world. Further, let’s accept I can recognize what separates me from them. With that understanding, let’s look at what I think separates the top level guys from the rest of us mere mortals.

### Good/Great Players Reinforce Success

As you read through this, keep this in mind. If a good/great player creates an opportunity, expect everything he has to support that success. The full weight of their attack will exploit the break and force you to scramble to cover the breach. If one unit survives crossing a fire lane, another will try, then another, and another until they are throughout the fire lane and unhinge your position.

### They Know the Rules/Charts

It seems silly to say this, but the better players know the rules. Generally, they know the rules as well or better than anyone else in the room. One definition of tactics is “the art or skill of employing available means to accomplish an end”. Within *ASL*, the Victory Conditions (VC) define our “ends”. The “means” are those things given in our Order of Battle (OB) on the scenario card. The rules define how we can “employ” those means. Not knowing the rules is effectively leaving a part of your toolkit on the side-line and trying to work without it.

This leaves the “art or skill” to the player. It is up to the player to use those rules in combination with the OB on the card to accomplish the VC. The great players know the rules—which means they know all of their options. They absolutely know how to get the most out of what they have. This also means good/great players recognize what is in your OB and how you can use it against them. They will have a plan to mitigate their own weaknesses and

attack yours.

### They Know the IFT

I know that this seems intuitive to many people but newer players don’t really grasp the full extent of the meaning. A good/great player would rather take two 6 -1 shots than a single 12 -1 shot. The more they are rolling on the IFT the happier they are. It presents more chances to get a low DR which can punish their opponent.

Conversely, good/great players will combine units into large firepower shots when facing +2/+3 or greater shots. This increases the odds of getting a result, especially when getting up past 12 firepower.

Good/great players also recognize not all shots are equal and there is an order to them. This is not limited to Encirclement. For instance, the Sniper’s Location and possible effects means a SAN activation can ruin some shots and these need to be taken first. Taking high-odd shots (e.g. likely to get an effect) can free up other units to do something else useful.

Good/great players know what it takes to DM your broken units.

Good/great players know how to properly stack to hit columns on the IFT. Rarely will you see them say “11 rounds down to 8” or something similar. They will move with this in mind. If they have the odd firepower, they will use it to DM units or take unlikely pot shots. Good/great players know that rolling as often as they can on the IFT gives them the best odds for results.

### They Understand How Terrain Influences Movement

This one is harder to define but you see it when they play if you’re smart enough to recognize it. Their pieces are always right where they need to be. They recognize the need to move into position before you do and when you finally recognize the need; you find they have the move covered. This means they are better positioned than you are at just about every stage of the game. They cut your rout paths. They have your skulking positions under fire. When you try to pull back, they are in position to shoot or place fire onto your movement paths. If you’re playing a good/great player and they do something you don’t understand, asking them to recall the moment later and explain what they were thinking. I can promise you,

it will be enlightening.

More easily seen, these players usually move aggressively at the beginning of the game to buy themselves more time in the later stages. They have examined the terrain and know the pacing they must achieve to win. On the attack, they push sharply into the defence. On the defence, they push out to interdict and disrupt the attacker’s timeline.

### They Have a Plan

One of the most intimidating things about *ASL* for many players is deciding what to do when presented with a scenario card for the first time. Better players always seem to know what they are doing. As a player, you need to develop a method for making a plan. It starts by examining the card, understanding the VC, and understanding your OB. I have talked about this before in my *ASL* Tactical Maxims article. Knowing these is only the beginning of making a plan though.

### They Encircle the Enemy More Often

Better players create chances to encircle your positions in their Movement Phase. Even if they do not break your units, the doubling of MF’s leaving the position is punishing in its own right. Without a leader, half of a unit’s available movement is required to even enter an Open Ground Location. This makes it easier for them to out pace you to the VC. It makes it tougher on you to maintain a cogent defence. It diminishes your attack with a +1 DRM and reduces your units’ morale by 1 making them more brittle. Suddenly, that Normal Morale Check is a 1MC. Rather than the odds of passing being in your favour, they are against you.



### They Cut Rout Paths

New players quickly learn that two units, 180 degrees apart, surrounding a broken unit will cause those units to surrender or die for failure to rout. Good to great players see ways to do this from a distance. It gets to be the rout phase and some combination of units 3 or more hexes away, in LOS of the broken unit, are restricting the direction your units can rout in or are outright eliminating them for failure to rout.

Absent that, they have got adjacent and can Interdict any Open Ground

Locations you must rout through forcing you to surrender.

When it's their units that break, they always have a rout path. There is always a leader handy to pick the mess. To accomplish this, great players tend to move their leaders last. If not, it may be one of the last pieces in that section of the map. This allows them to see what breaks in First Fire and position a leader by planning the upcoming rout phase. This means their attacks don't lose momentum.

## They Take Snap Shots

Good/Great players use more Snap Shots than the average player, particularly in urban terrain. They know a 2 flat Snap Shot has a better chance of getting a result than a 4+2 or a 4+3. Also, the 2 flat shot opens up the bottom of the IFT whereas a +2 shot removes it. Only the bottom of the IFT eliminates units absent a Fate DR.

## They Leave a Lot of Residual Fire Power

Good/Great players will lie down a literal WALL of residual firepower. They know each of those little green counters is another opportunity to roll on the IFT. A chance to get their opponent to roll morale checks. These players will place interlocking fire lanes and seek to channel you into kill boxes where they can bring loads of firepower with favourable DRMs.



Conversely, on attack, good/great players will risk RFP shots, even a 1 -2 or 2 -1 if the reward is there. A 7 morale unit attacked by a 1 -2 fire lane will break < 35% of the time. They will move units one at a time, through your RFP and fire lanes and continue to do so as long as they are being successful.

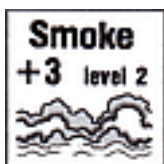


## They Use SMOKE (In All Its Forms)

If a better player has a movement factor left, don't be surprised to see him try for Infantry Smoke even with an exponent of 1. He has nothing to lose if the unit is where he wants it to be and has an additional +2 DRM to gain.



Expect to see a good player shoot for SMOKE every chance he gets. He may even Intensive Fires a 5/8" Gun to place an extra SMOKE counter. He will use his OBA for SMOKE. The good player realizes SMOKE helps him to close on his objectives.



## Some Treat Final Fire as Prep Fire for the Upcoming Turn

This is why good/great players will work to put your skulking positions under fire. Units which break under Final Fire won't be there to oppose his units in the upcoming movement phase. These units will be some place in the rear seeking to rally and get back into the game. By breaking your units in Final Fire, his units are free to move in his upcoming turn. He gets to have a fire phase AND still move the same units in his own turn.

These stacks of broken units represent opportunities to good/great players. Good/great players will seek to keep these stacks DM. Worse yet, they will also work very hard to put them into surrender/failure to rout situations. Don't be surprised if these units never get back into the game.

## They Take You Apart Piece by Piece

Good/Great players won't attack across the breadth of your defence. They will focus on one small piece and destroy it with overwhelming power. Then they will look around and find the next piece to destroy, relentlessly pushing forward and eating your units up one bite at a time. Good/Great players know all about bringing firepower to bear on the critical piece of the defence to unhinge the whole line.

Conversely, on defence good/great players will recognize opportunities for a local counter-attack to destroy an isolated unit. They will see AFVs left in motion as juicy targets. They will well know what you have that can hurt them and seek to take that away from you.

## They Deploy More Often

Deploying into half squads does sacrifice some firepower, but it also creates two MMC where one exists before. A half squad can carry three portage points, the same as a full squad. They can man MG and take inherent two shots just like a full squad, albeit at a lower firepower.

More importantly, half squads provide flexibility during the movement phase. They are able to scout concealed Locations and draw away firepower from more valuable units which might move later. While a full squad might struggle to cut a broken unit's rout path, two half squads can easily accomplish this. Two half squads can spread out and capture buildings far faster than a single full squad.

Finally, when playing Japanese in PTO, a half squad does not stripe, it breaks. Moving forward in a blob of half squads and recombining at the final objective can

preserve firepower. Those half squads also provide more flexibility in a Banzai!

## Their Usage of AFVs

Good/Great players will get everything they can out of an AFV. They will move, use the Smoke Dispenser, fire the Main Armament and MG's, and finally Bypass freeze your key Location. They will use their AFVs in combination with their Infantry to unhinge your defence.

Conversely, on defence they will have mutually supporting positions. They will know how to defend against Bypass freeze. Expect them to use Street Fighting, LATW, and lay Residual FP to protect their positions. They will use the full bag of tricks to diminish the effect of this tactic.

## They Take More Bounding First Fire Shots

I am always surprised how many people don't take Bounding First Fire (B1F) shots. At ranges of less  $\leq 6$ , the odds to hit with a B1F shot can be pretty good. Starting with a base to hit of 10, a turreted AFV taking a B1F shot CE can hit on an Original DR 6. Add in an Armor Leader or a large target and the numbers become even more favourable. In AFV combat, the AFV that shoots first is most likely to win. Great players know Gun Duels and how to ensure they shoot first. Knowing the charts, they instinctively know what Original DR they need to hit and how that interplays with special ammo to give themselves two bites at the apple.

Not only will they use special ammo to get multiple chances to roll low on the TH DR, they will take HEAT shots when shooting Infantry to get two cracks at them too.

## They Think Outside the Box

First, think outside your own box. Don't fall into a rut when playing. Countering predictable play is easy. Playing outside the norm isn't a call for reckless play, however. Try to learn from your opponents, especially those who act or play differently than you. These are opportunities to enrich your personal toolbox.

I saw an example of this viewing the German set up devised by Toby Pilling in episode 37 of the Illuminating Rounds YouTube channel hosted by Dave Ramsey and Martin Barker (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6K2NMOzmMA0>) Faced with utilizing such a small force and needing to defend a wide area, Toby uses the first Rally Phase to recombine two HS to augment firepower at the expense of field coverage. He disguises the weakness of his field coverage by stacking one concealed 7-0 leader with a PSK it cannot fire and another

7-0 with three concealment counters. This imaginative set up helped win a scenario that is overwhelmingly pro-US according to ROAR.

## Personal Morale Check (Or Why Jim Fails to Win More Often)



Many real-life battles are lost because the vanquished believed they had lost. Despite the situation, the losers lost heart and simply gave up. The same happens in ASL.

There are many times when a game is lost; however, there is a bit of luck in this game, and if you find yourself down and out, take a break: get a drink, use the restroom or whatever. Then with the VC in mind, come back and look at the game from a fresh perspective. Do you have a chance to win? Is it a reasonable chance? If you figure you have a one-third chance of winning, then don't give up.

Personally, I know the math and when repeatedly hit with low-odds attacks that go against me, I get frustrated with the balance of the DRs. This frustration then feeds into my lifelong battle against impatience. The combination of the two can then push me into a pessimistic spiral as my opponent continues to get luckier and luckier. My frustration boils over and then I lose focus and begin playing badly, tilting the game even further against me.

Good/great players can take advantage of luck that goes their way (something I can do too). Better yet, they can minimize the damage of luck going against them (something I can do once, maybe twice, but I come unglued as they stack up).

## Conclusion

As I said at the beginning, I do not consider myself a great player, but even as a novice artist can recognize the greatness of Michaelangelo. I can recognize the skill of the greats in ASL too. It takes time and effort to get good at anything, and ASL is no different. Taking these lessons to heart, and mastering them, one at a time, will make you into a better player.



# French Paratroopers in the Indochina War 1946-54

Craig Benn

*This is the second part of Craig's article looking at the French paratrooper units involved in the Indochina War, and covers five of the brigade sized drops the French paratroopers undertook – Pete)*

## Five Battles

A full account of airborne operations would require several books – so I have covered just the five brigade sized drops. Those interested in other battles can contact me for a more detailed 27,000 word treatise....or a 20,000 word article on 'Lea'.

## Operation Lea – October 1947

Lea was an audacious strike to capture the Viet Minh government which fled Hanoi for the Viet Bac in December 1946. Subsidiary objectives were capturing Cao Bang (the main arms route from China), re-establishing a French presence on the frontier and destroying enemy depots.

Groupement S (Lt Col Sauvagnac) would parachute onto Bac Kan, Cho Moi and Cho Don in the heart of the enemy redoubt.

Groupement B (Col Beaufre) with a motorised column would advance along Route Coloniale 4 from Lang Son to Cao Bang, then head southwest towards Bac Kan.

Groupement C (Col Communal) would move by river to take Tuyen Quang

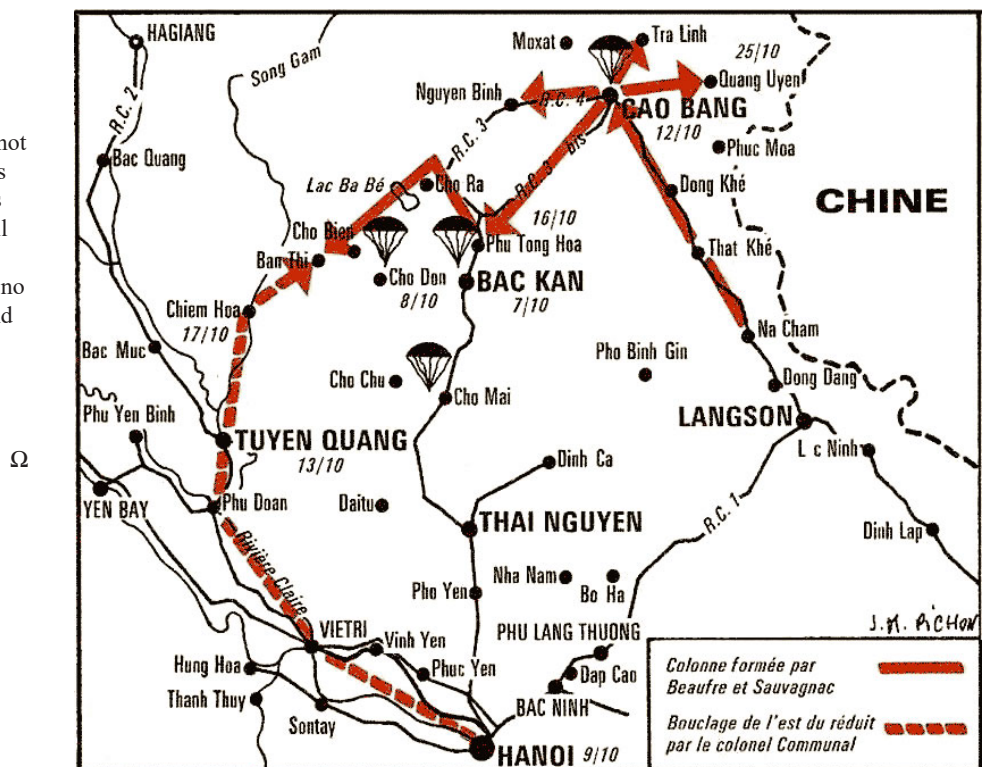
and then link with the Paras on the axis Chiem Hoa/ Ban Thi.

Sauvagnac had two battalions from his Demi-Brigade de Marche Parachutiste ("DBMP") – 1BPC and III/1RCP – while I/1RCP would be dropped on Cao Bang under Beaufre's command. The airborne plan was highly risky and hamstrung by lack of aircraft.

There were an estimated 12,000 men in the redoubt, including Tho tribesmen, Japanese deserters, communist Chinese and heavy weapons. With just 10 C-47's and 9 Ju52's available, the first wave from 1BPC was only 375 strong and would be on the ground 2.5 hours before the planes could reload and come back. Capturing the enemy leadership depended on surprise – ideally all three battalions should have landed at once. Instead the airborne phase would last 3 days, and I/1RCP would only drop at Cao Bang on J+2.

The relief forces would take at least a week over badly damaged roads and uncharted rivers – potentially longer if two key bridges at Cao Bang were blown. The DBMP was on its own for that time, with no airborne reserves in Tonkin, and just one other paratroop battalion in theatre.

At 8.15am on 7th October, 1er and 4e compagnies of 1BPC landed west of a ridge overlooking Bac Kan, while a platoon from 3e compagnie seized an undefended bridge to its east, and 16 men landed on the road to



the south.

Surprise was total and the Para's quickly overran a training company and seized the ridge with the radio station and governor's residence. The Vietnamese were expecting any paradrop on the small airfield to the northeast and their defences faced the wrong way. The second wave – the rest of 1BPC, DBMP HQ and engineer platoon arrived at 10.45am and the town was cleared by the afternoon.

1BPC had 1 dead and 3 missing, 4 wounded and 5 jump injuries. It claimed 260 enemy dead and 200 captured but interrogations revealed most of the high value political-military targets had fled. Neither Giap or Ho Chi Minh were present, and Communist Party General Secretary Truong Chinh and Chief of the General Staff Hoang Van Thai escaped. Ho's 'minister of state' Nguyen Van To was captured and 'shot while trying to escape' two days later. Bernard Fall's claim that Japanese and Nazi German instructors were captured is not repeated in DBMP records.

Bac Kan's garrison had only been one company from the 49th battalion/72nd regiment and a training battalion from the Tran Quoc Tuan infantry college. Its main concern had been to evacuate the senior leadership – despite apparently heavy casualties this was achieved. The French cordon was too thin, and the Cau river was shallow and easily fordable.

At 2.30pm, 230 men from III/1RCP (10e and 11e compagnies plus a mortar section) were dropped at Cho Moi, some 30km to the south. There were only scattered shots – it had been hastily evacuated.

On October 8th a Catalina flying boat sent a message that Ho Chi Minh had been captured and that Bac Kan was under heavy attack (neither was true). The drop on Cho Don was diverted to Bac Kan and 70 men landed before the mistake was realized. A commission later found the radio operator mentally ill rather than a Viet Minh agent. The remaining 200 men from III/1RCP took Cho Don without resistance in the afternoon.

The next day 11e compagnie heading north from Cho Moi was ambushed. When the morning fog cleared they were in an open rice paddy overlooked by a wooded mountain and hemmed in by a river. They took 10 dead and 15 wounded and retreated, covered by smoke from the mortars with 10e compagnie coming up to evacuate the wounded.

The same morning 369 men from I/1RCP jumped onto Cao Bang. The city was on a narrow peninsula between two rivers, with a citadel of brick barracks at its base. The 1er compagnie would land between the rivers and head north to take the citadel, while the 2e and 3e, landed west of both rivers and attacked east.

The lead Ju52 was hit and set on fire by a 12.7mm machine gun from 675



company/74th regiment emplaced on hills west of the town. The soldiers nearest the door were able to jump although badly burned but 13 men (including the crew) died in the plane. According to Giap, the Lea operations plan was recovered from the crash site.

I/1RCP's jump was scattered, but small groups near their targets attacked aggressively with support from Spitfire IX's. The AA position was overrun, and the bridges seized intact within an hour and a half. Casualties apart from the lead plane (13 dead 9 wounded) were light (1 dead, 1 wounded, 1 missing and 8 jump injuries) against an estimated 90 Viet Minh killed.

In the next week, there were plenty of skirmishes but only one large scale counterattack at Cho Moi on the night of 15-16th October. Two regular battalions – around 500-600 men – were driven off at the cost of 3 killed and 8 wounded.

Beaufre's column reached Cao Bang on the 12th and Bac Kan on the 17th. I/1RCP was trucked back to Lang Son, but the rest of the DBMP would stay on until November. Sauvagnac was amazed at the ease of the operation but this misread the situation. Recognizing superior French firepower, the Viet Minh concentrated on hitting vulnerable supply lines.

I/1RCP's 4e compagnie (which had not jumped) was ambushed on 22nd October at Khoan Bo while escorting a river convoy. 75mm guns shot up the French LCI's resulting in 11 dead, while 4e compagnie lost only 1 wounded and cleared both riverbanks. On the 23rd a different convoy lost a LCM and 38 dead - temporarily cutting the river route.

Lea was a mixed victory – Giap reckoned two thirds of his munitions had been used, destroyed or captured, but the French were overextended, and guarding RC4 caused a steady trickle of casualties.

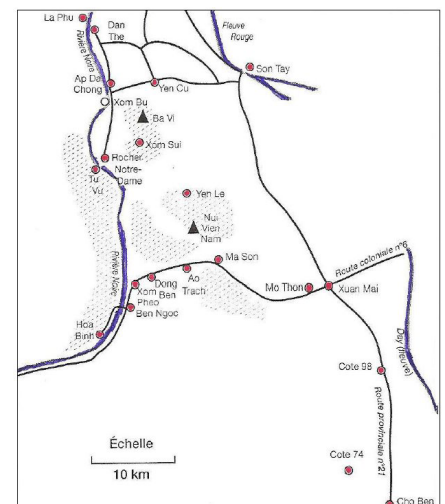
## Operation Lotus – November 1951

The strategic situation had changed markedly by the next big drop. In Sep-Oct 1950, the French suffered a humiliating

defeat evacuating Cao Bang, losing 6,000 dead/missing from 7,500 engaged. The French CinC was sacked and replaced by General Jean DeLattre de Tassigny (commander of the 1st French army in 1944-5). He revived morale, forming regimental sized groupes mobile ("GM") from available reserves. Giap then suffered heavy casualties attempting to break into the Red River Delta in early 1951.

The war was stalemated – the Viet Minh held the mountains and forests but were unable to stand up to French firepower in the lowlands. De Lattre was under pressure to mount an offensive to justify the increasing amounts of US aid. He chose to strike southwest a short distance from the Delta at Hoa Binh, the Moug capital. This would cut the lines of communication between the Viet Bac in the northwest (where the Viet Minh had their arsenals and training camps) and the rice growing area around Thanh Hoa – the 'South Delta base'. A French blockade had inflicted near famine conditions in the Viet Bac.

On November 14th 2BPC landed at Hoa Binh at 12.30pm, (fog preventing an earlier jump), with 1BPC dropping on the eastern side of the Black river at 2.10pm and 7BPC further north at 5.30pm. It was the last time the Ju52's were used in major operations. Total casualties were four wounded and one missing, while three Viet Minh were captured. A mechanized column



reached the paratroopers within 2 days.

By November 22nd the operation was 'over' and 7BPC was pulled back to Hanoi. The French then set up a string of forts to guard the Black River supply lines (to the north) and RC6 (to the east). 2BPC remained at Hoa Binh, while 1BPC garrisoned Ap Da Chong in the river sector. It took nearly a month before the Viet Minh reacted in strength massing the 304th and 312th divisions. The French caught wind of this and launched a spoiling attack on 10th December.

One groupe mobile with 7BPC attacked north towards the lower slopes of the 4,200 foot Ba Vi mountain, while 1BPC attacked eastwards into the Xom Sui depression. Moving in single file through forest, 1BPC ran into the entire 209th regiment and the lead company was surrounded and cut off. The rest of the battalion tried unsuccessfully to break through, while the Viet Minh kept close to reduce the effects of artillery and airstrikes. A wounded lieutenant sacrificed himself to allow ten of his platoon to escape, and a few men survived by hiding or playing dead but the company was wiped out. 1BPC suffered 87 dead or missing and 15 wounded, claiming 350 Viet Minh KIA.

This was the start of a prolonged battle of attrition lasting over two months. By January 12th both the river supply route and RC6 had been cut, leaving Hoa Binh to be supplied by air. The French abandoned the Black river forts and concentrated on clearing a 40km stretch of RC6 methodically by foot. Virtually all the troupes aéroportées – 1BEP, 2BEP, 1BPC, 2BPC, 5BPC, 7BPC and 1BPVN were involved at various stages as conventional infantry. It was arguably a misuse of their shock function but three Viet Minh divisions (the 308th was also committed) were roughly handled.

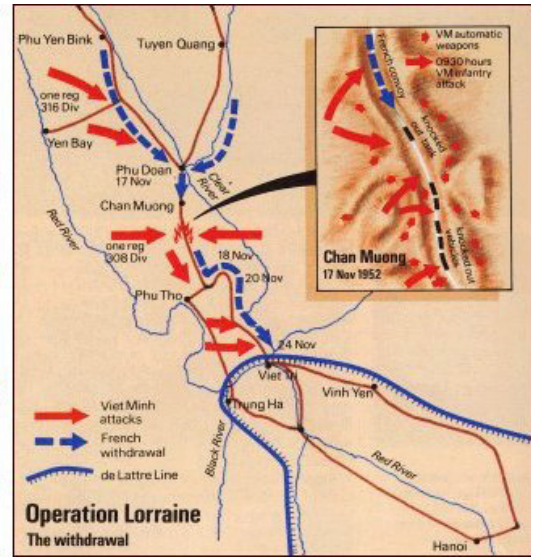
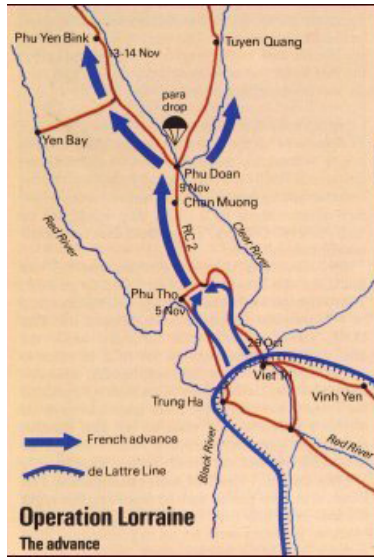
General Salan (DeLattre died of cancer in Jan52) decided the cost of resupplying the various garrisons was too high and evacuated Hoa Binh in February.

## Operation Marion – November 1952

In October 1952, the Viet Minh began an ambitious offensive aimed at Nghia Lo and then the T'ai federation and upper Laos. The T'ai were French allies who had been granted considerable autonomy, while the Laotian rulers were staunchly pro-French. For political reasons, the French would be forced to defend them – in highly mountainous terrain and supplied only by air.

Nghia Lo fell in 24 hours and Bigeard's 6BPC which had landed at Tu Le had to retreat before a Viet Minh division in an epic forced march. Many isolated garrisons were overrun – the remainder retreated towards two base aéro-terrestre at Lai Chau (the T'ai capital) and Na San.

Salan planned to strike at Giaps



supply lines and force the advancing Viet Minh to come back and defend their depots. Operation Lorraine would involve four Groupes Mobile, two armoured battalions, a diassaut – some 30,000 troops. Three battalions of paratroopers would capture Phu Doan and river crossings once the ground forces made sufficient progress.

Lorraine started on 29th October, but with fierce resistance from regional troops, the French took a week to advance 20 miles. The airborne phase - 'Marion' - did not happen until November 9th, with 53 C-47's in rotation dropping 3BPC and 2BEP north of Phu Doan, and 1BEP to the south.

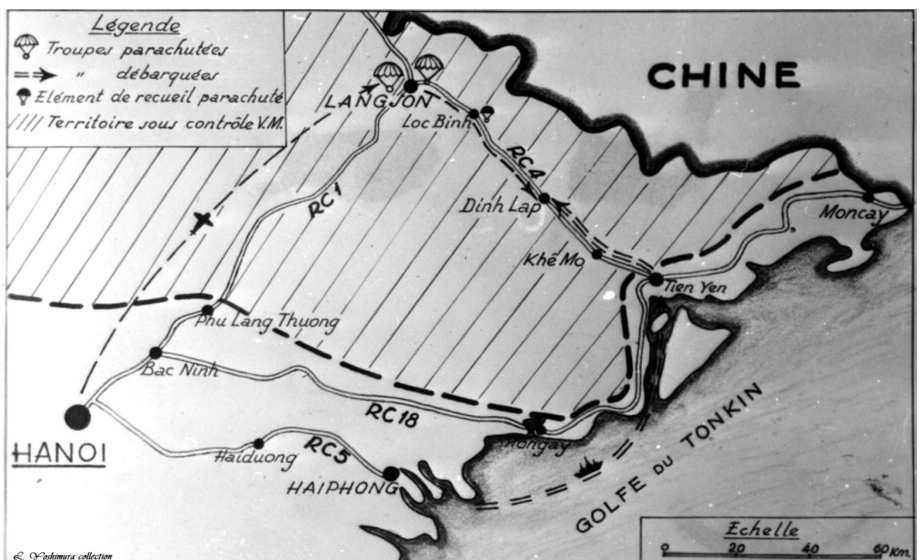
In total 2,354 men landed, while casualties were 16 jump injuries and 1 killed. There was almost no fighting for the Para's – by the end of the day they had linked up with Diassaut 12 and Colonel Dodeliers armour. Over the next few days they cleared the banks of the Chay river and spread out to look for depots.

Dodelier commented unfavourably on the Paratroopers lack of transport, and the need to spend as much as 48 hours collecting parachutes. Between 10th -14th November the French advanced another 40 miles northwest up Route Provinciale

11. On the 14th Salan ended the operation, and the paratroopers were trucked back to Hanoi on the 16th. All three battalions were then flown to Na San between 18-20th November.

Although a moderate amount of material was captured (including some Russian trucks), Lorraine was a failure which did not justify the forces committed. The big depots were at Yen Bay and Tuyen Quang but Salan did not risk pushing that far. The lack of surprise meant many supplies were dispersed before the drop, and no units were diverted from the Viet Minh advance. Giap did send two regular regiments to reinforce the regionals – but these were his reserves who had not crossed the Red River as they would have been difficult to supply. One regiment ambushed GM's 1 and 4 just behind the Para's at Chan Muong pass on November 17th inflicting 300 casualties.

Salan lacked the air transport to supply Lai Chau, Na San and Lorraine if the roads were cut behind Dodelier. He prioritized Na San which fought off a major attack from November 23rd-December 2nd.





## Operation Hirondelle – July 1953

French intelligence learned of a brief period when regular forces would leave Lang Son virtually undefended. Security was tight - planning was limited to the task force commander and one intelligence officer, with no pre-positioning of units in advance. Troops were brought back to Hanoi under cover of the July 14th Bastille day celebrations. At 2pm on the 16th they were confined to barracks. Lt Col Docourneau briefed senior leaders at 3pm who then had an hour to brief their own men. The planes would take off at 7am the next morning.

6BPC's targets were two limestone cave complexes while 8BPC took Lang Son itself. After destroying any munitions, both battalions would force-march towards the coast down RC4. 2BEP would land at Loc Binh about 25km away with an engineer company to repair bridges. An amphibious force would land at Tien Yen, advance up RC4 towards them and provide trucks for extraction. The opposition was estimated as two depot guard companies, plus the Lang Son regional battalion. Three regional and one main force battalion could be expected within 2-3 days, with the bulk of the 308th division soon after and possible Chinese intervention.

At 8am on the 17th 58 C-47's dropped 2,000 men over the target – 6BPC, 8BPC, Docourneau's HQ and engineers. One cave was guarded by two machine gun positions. A sergeant killed one crew with two head shots from 200 meters when his platoon leader made a zig-zag run to draw fire. A few minutes later the second was knocked out by strafing Bearcats. But two French platoons opened fire on each other by mistake with 1 killed and 2 wounded. Some jump injuries were successfully evacuated by S-51 helicopters.

Supplies were catalogued, documents seized or burnt and at 4pm explosive charges set off. By 5pm the Paras set off towards Loc Binh with 200 civilians who wanted to flee. They marched through the night reaching 2BEP at 2am the next day. Inflatable boats had been dropped and the column crossed late on the 18th to avoid the heat. Viet Minh resistance was negligible, and the paras marched 37 miles in 30 hours to meet Legionnaires of GM5 coming the other way. There was one dead and 6 wounded in combat; four died from heat exhaustion. The paras lost on average 11 pounds of weight – by July 20th the entire force was back in Hanoi.

The Viet Minh had little idea what was happening and reacted slowly. On the 17th the few troops available covered other local depots, fearing further attacks. On the 18th the local commander on learning the Paras were at Loc Binh, formed a commission to interrogate locals to uncover traitors. Only on the 19th was it realised the French were withdrawing to the coast, and

the column rearguard came under harassing fire on the 20th.

The booty included 1,000 Zb30 automatic rifles and about 250 small arms, some trucks and other stores. Viet Minh combat losses were only 21 dead. It was a brilliantly executed raid – its main value in forcing the Viet Minh to strengthen their rear security.

## Operation Castor – November 1953

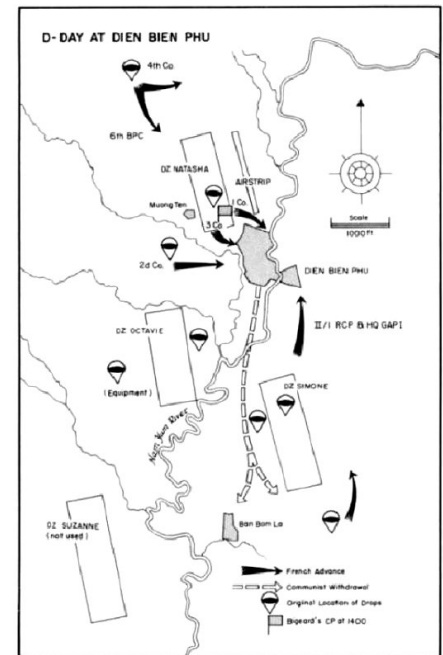
Operation 'Castor' was the largest combat drop in the Indochina war – 6 parachute battalions, plus a battalion of recoilless rifles and a company of engineers – 4,195 men in three days. The objective was Dien Bien Phu – captured by the Viet Minh a year before. The valley produced 30% of the T'ai federation's rice and half its opium crop. It was also on the invasion route to the Laotian royal capital of Luang Prabang.

Opposition was expected to be two infantry companies and the 148th regimental HQ. Objectives were to capture the airstrip, plus the regimental staff and documents. Enemy strength was underestimated – there was also a battalion weapons company, an artillery company with 120mm mortars and recoilless rifles and another infantry company. On the morning of the drop, two companies were on a training exercise near the airfield.

The first wave of 65 Dakotas dropped 6BPC west of the airstrip, and II/1RCP to the south, hoping to cut off any escape route. The morning fog hadn't completely cleared – two of 6BPC's companies were mis-dropped, one two miles away. The rest of the battalion was involved in a confused fight – aerial photographs showed a flat DZ and failed to pick up man high elephant grass.

Eventually airstrikes broke the back of resistance, and the lead companies seized the village of Muong Thanh about 3pm. It was too late – the prize of the regimental staff had gone. II/1RCP was behind schedule and much scattered and had great difficulty making radio contact and the Viet Minh escaped through a gap in their cordon. Total French casualties were 15 dead (10 from 6BPC) 34 wounded and 13 jump injuries. The Viet Minh lost 115 dead, 4 wounded prisoners and about 40 weapons as well as the documents of 910 battalion and 226 weapons company.

While engineers repaired and extended the airstrip, the Paras struck out towards T'ai partisans that were retreating from Lai Chau. II/1RCP left Dien Bien Phu on the 23rd to meet the lead elements (some 700 strong) which arrived in fairly good order. However 316th division arrived at Lai Chau on 12th December and slaughtered the follow up columns – less than 10% of those 2,100 irregulars would reach the valley. There were some skirmishes between



the Paras and this force, with 1BPC losing 14 dead and 26 wounded in an ambush on 4th December. GAP1 (6BPC, II/1RCP and 1BPC) were pulled out between 12-16th December marking the end of the airborne phase.

## Conclusion

Les troupes aéroportées were a small fraction of total French forces – in November 1953 totalling 6 of 94 French infantry battalions, and 6 of the 221 'national' battalions. The majority of this force was tied down in static defence and rarely if ever saw an enemy. In contrast the paratroopers were constantly in action, taking and inflicting heavy casualties. Even so the majority of their operations were not large scale battles but company or battalion security sweeps against regional guerrillas. Their commanders regularly complained about being misused as conventional infantry.

The crushing defeat at Dien Bien Phu – well described elsewhere – showed that just like WW2, paratroopers cut off from resupply could only fight 'heavy' conventional forces for so long. Viet Minh artillery closed the airstrip, and AAA forced transport planes to drop supplies from ever higher and more inaccurate heights.

The garrison was equivalent to a reinforced division, in theory a survivable loss given Viet Minh casualties. But all the 'French' paratroop battalions were destroyed here, leaving some less effective national battalions and the just arrived green 7BPC. In a stroke, the French high command lost its ability to intervene to save any remote post. There were no more combat drops in the brief interval before the war ended. The surviving paratroopers would be denied peace as most of them would immediately be embroiled in the Algerian war.

# "THIS IS THE CALL TO ARMS!"

This is the latest edition of the *ASL Players Directory*, and includes all UK ASLers whose information has been confirmed within the last ten years (as shown by the date [in dd mm yyyy format] at the end of each entry.) It is broken down by country and then by postal code region.

## England

David Turpin, 24 Chestnut Rise, Bar Hill, Cambs (22 Nov 2022)  
Martin Castrey, 32 Swallowfield, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B79 7SG (02 May 2020)  
Craig Ambler, 5 Ambleton Way, Queensbury, Bradford, W. Yorks., BD13 2DZ (10 May 2017)  
Wes Hope, 16 Wakely Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH11 9EE (15 Jul 2017)  
Dave Schofield, 11 Longfield Drive, West Parley, Ferndown, Dorset, BH22 8TY (31 Oct 2014)  
Shaun Carter, 3 Arnside Grove, Brightmet, Bolton, Lancs, BL2 6PL (02 Nov 2019)  
Bernie Flint, 58 Coventry Street, Sussex, BN1 5PQ (15 Feb 2018)  
Ian Kenney, 53 Withdean Crescent, Brighton, W. Sussex, BN1 6WG (02 Dec 2018)  
Marc Hanna, 17 The Lawns, St. Marys Close, Eastbourne, Sussex, BN20 8HB (10 Sep 2018)  
Martin Barker, Tradewinds, Wrattling Road, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 0DA (09 Feb 2023)  
Gareth Evans, 29 Hillfield Road, Little Sutton, West Cheshire, Cheshire, CH66 1JA (25 Oct 2019)  
Ian Ainsworth, 23 Lyneal Avenue, Great Sutton, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH66 2HX (25 Jan 2023)  
Miles Wiehahn, 37 Nursery Rise, Great Dunmow, Essex, CM6 1XW (19 Mar 2014)  
Derek Cox, Whiteways, 77a St Nicholas Road, Witham, Essex, CM8 2JE (16 Mar 2022)  
Nick Ranson, 31 Ashlong Grove, Halstead, Essex, CO9 2QH (25 Feb 2023)  
Joe Arthur, 33 Cedar Close, St Peters, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 3BU (26 Apr 2023)  
Paul Osborne, deliberately missing, Littlebourne, Canterbury, Kent, CT3 (30 Aug 2014)  
Aaron Sibley, 79 Dane Road, Margate, Kent, CT9 2AE (04 Oct 2014)  
Ian Pollard, 19 Doria Drive, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 4HS (21 Jan 2023)  
Richard Webb, 2 Boundary Close, Burton-On-Trent, Staffs, DE13 0PG (02 Feb 2023)  
Simon Staniforth, 131A Radbourne Street, Derby, Derbyshire, DE22 3BW (17 Mar 2023)  
Sean Pratt, Bankside Cottage, Duffield Bank, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 4BG (28 Jan 2014)  
Neil Brunger, 72 Penhill Close, Ouston, Chester Le Street, Co. Durham, DH2 1SG (30 Jun 2021)  
Brian Hooper, 1 Beaconsfield Street, Darlington, County Durham, DL3 6EP (25 Feb 2020)  
Georgios Kiokpasoglou, 51 Chesterford Road, Manor Park, London, E12 6LD (09 Mar 2015)  
Paul Healey, 19 Beechfield, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, EN11 9QQ (17 Aug 2021)  
Lee Bray, 16 Admiral Way, Exeter, Devon, EX2 7GA (11 Nov 2015)  
Ulric Schwela, 18 Stuart Road, Thornton, Lancashire, FY5 4EE (24 Mar 2023)  
Richard Munroe, 104 St. Andrews Road South, LYTHAM ST. ANNES, Lancashire, FY8 1PS (04 Mar 2020)  
Michael Davies, 36 Heyhouses Court, Heyhouses Lane, Lytham St Annes, Lancs., FY8 3RF (16 Mar 2023)  
Paul Currie, 18 Rogerley Close, Lytham, Lancs, FY8 4PL (13 Jun 2017)  
Russell Gough, Belclare, New Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 3NX (13 Feb 2023)  
Malcolm Hatfield, 336B Alexandra Ave, South Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 9DB (03 Apr 2019)  
Chris Walton, nb Burgan Pod, Aylesbury Canal Society, Canal Basin, Walton Street, Aylesbury, HP21 7QG (12 Feb)  
Neil Andrews, 40 Barnshaw House, Coxhill Way, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP21 8FN (17 Aug 2020)  
Malcolm Harlock, House, High Street, Laxfield, Suffolk, IP13 8DU (03 Apr 2019)  
Paul Legg, 21 Grimsey Road, Leiston, Suffolk, IP16 4BW (18 Mar 2023)  
Denis Read, 21 Clench Rd, Holbrook, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP92PP (30 Jun 2016)  
Sam Prior, 19 Beresford Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT2 6LP (27 Aug 2020)  
Andy Smith, 31 Egerton Road, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4AP (29 Oct 2013)  
Ray Porter, 38 Bishopton Street, Wavertree, Liverpool, Merseyside, L15 1EW (21 Jan 2020)  
Craig Benn, 29 Leybourne road, Gateacre, Liverpool, L25 4SW (07 Mar 2023)  
Damien Maher, 21 Crestor Road, Woolton, Liverpool, L25 6DN (23 Feb 2020)  
Mark Wickens, Haven Lea, Queens Drive, Windermere, Cumbria, LA23 2EL (29 Sep 2015)  
Brett Lynes, 2 Church Row, Little Stretton, Leicestershire, LE22 2FT (14 Mar 2020)  
Andy Bagley, Four Pines, Elmete Croft, Scholes, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS15 4BE (25 Mar 2023)  
Rob Bywater, 66 Firs Road, Sale, Cheshire, M33 5EJ (19 Sep 2016)  
Daniel Ryan, 110 Maidstone Road, Bounds Green, Enfield, London, N11 2JP (28 Aug 2015)  
Greg Stroud, 96 Mercers Road, Flat A, London, N19 4PU (01 Feb 2015)  
Stuart Brant, Flat 37, Penrose House, 16 Newsholme Lane, Winchmore Hill, London, N21 1TW (04 Sep 2020)  
David Lincoln, 200a Tufnell Park Road, London, United Kingdom (+44), N7 0EE (10 Oct 2021)  
Andrew Cochrane, 20 Scott Avenue, Cramlington, Northumberland, NE23 1HE (18 Sep 2016)  
Andy McMaster, 19 Ventnor Gardens, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear, NE26 1QB (08 Jan 2023)  
Ian Willey, 17 Strawberry Bank, Huthwaite, Sutton-In-Ashfield, Notts., NG17 2QG (12 Mar 2014)  
Colin Bell, RAF Cranwell, Sleaford, Linc, NG34 8hb (24 Jan 2017)  
Nigel Ashcroft, 5 Grasmere Way, Thornwell, Chesham, Gwent, NP16 5SS (20 Feb 2018)

Pedro Santos, 4 Park Avenue, London, NW11 7SJ (13 Sep 2018)  
Tom Jackson, 40 Keyes Rd, London, NW2 3XA (09 Feb 2015)  
Martin Mayers, 41 Frank Fold, Heywood, Lancs., OL10 4FF (04 Oct 2022)  
Toby Pilling, 51 Wensum Drive, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 7RJ (28 Feb 2022)  
Bill Durrant, Firs Cottage, Fyfield, Abingdon, Oxon, OX13 5LR (05 Mar 2023)  
Stefano Cuccurullo, Flat 46, Room 4, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX3 (16 Mar 2022)  
John Turpin, 18 Mallard Way, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 9HT (26 Apr 2023)  
Simon Horspool, Osborne House, High Street, Stoke Ferry, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE33 9SF (03 Dec 2016)  
Keith Bristow, 39 Carronade Walk, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO3 5LX (12 Oct 2017)  
Simon Prior, 29 Burgoyne Road, Southsea, Hampshire, PO5 2JJ (23 Jan 2014)  
Justin Key, 25 Hilary Avenue, Portsmouth, Hants., PO6 2PP (07 Mar 2017)  
Jeremy Howison-Haworth, 15 Balcares Road, Leyland, Preston, Lancashire, PR25 2EL (20 Jul 2017)  
Bill Sherliker, 16 The Heathers, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancs., PR5 8LJ (06 Mar 2014)  
Paul Sanderson, Flat 4, Russell Street, Reading, Berks., RG1 7XD (03 Apr 2019)  
Nick Rijke, 59 York Road, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 7NR (28 Nov 2020)  
Inuka Jayasekera, Flaxman Close, Reading, RG6 5TH (13 Apr 2015)  
Kevin Croskey, 4 Beechey Way, Copthorne, W. Sussex, RH10 3LT (09 Aug 2021)  
Tom Rodwell, Sheepwash Farm, Copsale Road, Maplehurst, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 6QY (12 Jun 2022)  
Gerard Burton, Flat 7 The Beacons, Beaconsfield Road, Chelwood Gate, East Sussex, RH17 7LH (22 Nov 2022)  
Joel Ayres, 8 Wordsworth Rise, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 1TW (09 Sep 2015)  
Mark Tomlinson, 12 Briar Road, Sheffield, S7 1SA (10 Dec 2018)  
Michael Essex, 1B Wrottesley Road, London, SE18 3EW (03 Apr 2019)  
David Ramsey, 9 Pollards Way, Lower Stondon, Bedfordshire, SG16 6NF (14 Apr 2023)

Nic Grecas, 6 Western Way, Letchworth, HERTS, SG6 4SE (08 Sep 2019)  
Matthew Ellis, 201 Dialstone Lane, Stockport, SK2 7LF (05 Mar 2023)  
Andrew Campen, 15B Mauldeth Close, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 3NP (08 Feb 2018)  
Andrew Dando, 26 Constable Drive, Marple Bridge, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 5BG (03 Apr 2019)  
William Binns, 20 The Warren, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 4EH (03 Apr 2023)  
Adrian Catchpole, Flat 1, 19 Bank Street, Melksham, Wilts., SN12 6LE (04 Jul 2019)  
Martin Lane, 52 Oaktree Road, Southampton, SO18 1PH (08 Apr 2016)  
Peter Catchpole, 8 Skintle Green, Colden Common, Winchester, Hampshire, SO21 1UB (14 Feb 2023)  
Dominic McGrath, 129 Archers Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 9BE (02 Jan 2016)  
Jerome Hoffman, Graemar House, Graemar Lane, Sheffield English, Hampshire, SO516FW (12 Jan 2022)  
James Crossfield, Lower Langham Farm, Langham Lane, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 5NT (30 Jul 2022)  
Jonathan Smith, 3 Lingdale Avenue, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR6 8AZ (18 Sep 2016)  
Mark Finney, 28, Caverswall Rd, WestonCoyney, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST3 6PE (10 Mar 2023)  
Simon Church, 7 Beauchamp Terrace, Putney, London, SW15 1BW (15 Oct 2015)  
Simon Taylor, 81 Valley Road, London, SW16 2XL (30 Sep 2014)  
Frazer Greenshields, 231 Staplegrove Road, Taunton, Somerset, TA2 6AG (21 Oct 2022)  
Steven Hall, 43 Millstream Gardens, Tonedale, Wellington, Somerset, TA21 0AA (01 Aug 2021)  
Paul Case, 4 Brymas House, Rockwell Green, Wellington, Somerset, TA21 9BZ (25 Jan 2015)  
Nick Carter, Burnette, New Works Lane, New Works, Telford, Shropshire, TF6 5BS (19 Sep 2016)  
Michael Clark, 25 Ravenswood Avenue, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 3SG (24 Feb 2021)  
Gerard Linehan, 8 Gander Green Crescent, Hampton, TW12 2FA (06 Oct 2017)  
Mick Allen, 107 Gresham Road, Staines, TW18 2FB (25 Oct 2020)  
Richard Dagnall, 480 Chertsey Road, Twickenham, Middlesex, TW2 6PS (08 Aug 2017)  
christopher bourne, 52 horsenden lane north, greenford, middlesex, ub6 0pa (04 Dec 2014)  
Daniel Leon, 4 Luxemburg Gardens, London, W6 7EA (15 Feb 2020)  
John Kennedy, 2 Hawthorn Road, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9RG (03 Jan 2023)  
Dave Booth, 47 Dunnoke Grove, Birchwood, Birchwood, Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 6NW (24 Jan 2018)  
Matt Dean, 64 Northfield Lane, Horbury, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF4 5JL (13 Jun 2019)  
Matt Blackman, 10 Alfred St, Wigan, Lancs., WN1 2HL (03 Apr 2019)  
Greg Jameson, 86 Fulbeck Ave, Wigan, WN3 5QL (23 Jan 2020)  
Peter Burbury, 18 Charles Way, Malvern, WR14 2NA (08 Mar 2023)  
Wayne Baumber, Cherry Trees, Danes Green, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR3 7RU (29 Mar 2023)  
Ian Morris, 5 Coltman Close, Lichfield, Staffs., WS14 9YS (29 Mar 2023)

## Scotland

Paul Saunders, 2 Devenick Way, Portlethen, Aberdeen, AB12 4PP (07 Feb 2019)  
Tony Gibson, 107 Queen's Den, Hazelhead, Aberdeen, AB15 8BN (31 Jan 2023)  
Steve Cook, 199 Hiltown Avenue, Aberdeen, AB24 4LD (27 Jan 2023)  
Martin Vicca, 14 Leslie Crescent, Westhill, Aberdeen, AB32 6UZ (15 Jan 2023)  
Alan Hume, 62/2 Bryson Road, Edinburgh, Midlothian, EH11 1DR (18 Apr 2023)  
Rod Lobban, 3 Mortonhall Park Loan, Edinburgh, EH17 8SN (08 Mar 2023)  
Pete Philipps, 19 Main Street, Kirkliston, Midlothian, EH29 9AE (10 Feb 2023)  
Darren Kilfara, 68 Wilson Place, Dunbar, East Lothian, EH42 1GG (09 May 2017)  
John Martin, 85 Pyothall Road, Broxburn, West Lothian, EH52 6HW (23 Jan 2023)  
Bill Finlayson, 19 Taymouth Road, Polmont, Falkirk, Stirlingshire, FK2 0PF (17 Feb 2023)  
Andrew Kassian, 7 Burnbrae Road, Auchinloch, Glasgow, G66 5DQ (06 Oct 2016)  
Oliver Gray, 117 Upper Dalgairn, Cupar, Fife, KY15 4JQ (04 Feb 2019)  
James O'Neill, Flat 73 Woodside Tower, Motherwell, Lanarkshire, ML1 2HX (16 Jul 2020)  
Hugh O'Donnell, 11 Rossbank Road, PORT GLASGOW, Renfrewshire, PA14 5AD (28 Dec 2016)  
Neil Stevens, Linton Mill Farmhouse, Morebattle, Kelso, Roxburghshire, TD5 8AE (17 Oct 2022)

## Wales

Alex Ashton, 94 The Spinney, Brackla, Bridgend, Bridgend, CF32 2JE (11 Sep 2022)  
Chris Dalgety, 4 Library Street, Canton, Cardiff, Cardiff, CF5 1QD (30 Dec 2014)

If there are any mistakes, please let me know so I can correct them for the next edition. If you have Internet access you can also correct your details on the *VFTT* web site at [www.vftt.co.uk/my-account.asp](http://www.vftt.co.uk/my-account.asp).

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# LASL

London's Advanced Squad Leaders (LASL) welcome ASL/ASLSK players or potential players. If you're passing through or staying over in London, you're welcome to come along and take part. There's no fee for taking part or spectating. We usually meet on the first Saturday of each month from around 9am until around 5.30pm. We are located at The Penderel's Oak, 283-288 High Holborn, Holborn, London, WC1V 7HP. More details can be found at <https://londonasl.siterubix.com/>. Send your name and contact details to [lasi.double.one@gmail.com](mailto:lasi.double.one@gmail.com) to arrange a game and ensure there are no last minute problems.

# ON THE CONVENTION TRAIL

There are more and more *ASL* tournaments cropping up all over the world. In fact, it is possible to be involved in an *ASL* tournament at least once a month, often more, if you were so inclined (and had the financial means to live such a life - I wish!).

If you plan on holding an *ASL* tournament, please let me know and I'll include the details here, space permitting.

If you contact anyone regarding these tournaments, please tell them that I sent you!

## JUNE DOUBLE ONE 2023

**When:** 24 – 25 June.

**Where:** Writtle College, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 3RR. On-site facilities include en-suite and standard bedrooms, free car parking on application, mini market, cash points, a self-service cafeteria and licensed bars. Bedroom rates are likely to be similar to 2021 (EX: £39.60 for a single room and breakfast).

**Fee:** £15.00.

**Format:** A two day tournament with two rounds on Saturday and one on Sunday offering a choice of scenarios. A number of mini-tournaments will be run on Friday, and friendly games will also be available throughout the weekend.

**Contact:** For a booking form contact the organisers by email at [lasl.double.one@gmail.com](mailto:lasl.double.one@gmail.com). Check out the web site at <https://londonasl.siterubix.com/> for the latest details.

## OCTOBER ASLOK XXXVII

**When:** 1 – 8 October.

**Where:** Four Points by Sheraton, 4181 W. 150th St., Cleveland, Ohio 44135, phone 216-252-7700, fax 216-252-3850.

**Fee:** \$30.00 for those pre-registering, \$40.00 on the door.

**Format:** Same as always. Weekend tournament plus numerous mini-tournaments. There is also an informal USA vs. World Cup where everyone keeps track of their games and a plaque is presented to the winning side.

**Notes:** T-shirts are \$10.00 each (XXL \$13.00, XXXL \$15.00, 4XL \$18.00)

**Contact:** Bret Hildebran, 17810 Geauga Lake Rd, Chagrin Falls, OH 44023-2208 or by email at [BretHildebran@gmail.com](mailto:BretHildebran@gmail.com). Check out the web site at [www.aslok.org](http://www.aslok.org) for the latest details.

## NOVEMBER GRENADE 2023

**When:** 2 – 5 November.

**Where:** Schacht III Event & Conference Center, Koststraße 8, 45899 Gelsenkirchen. Room rates start at €85 per night for a single room including dinner.

**Fee:** €10 per day. Due to the limited capacity of the venue, registration **MUST** be made by 2 October.

**Format:** The main tournament is a Swiss style five round tournament running from Friday to Sunday. There will be no mini tournaments in 2023.

**Contact:** Check out the Grenadier web site at <https://www.aslgermany.de/> for up to date information.

## BOUNDING FIRST FIRE 2023

**When:** 15 – 19 November.

**Where:** Headlands Hotel, 611 New South Promenade, Blackpool, England, FY4 1NJ. Tel 01253 341 179. Room rates to be confirmed but started at £40.00 for a shared room or £45 for a single room in 2022 (breakfast included). Bar meals and good beer are also available at the hotel.

**Fee:** £20.00.

**Format:** Five round tournament beginning Friday morning, with an unpublished scenario in use in each round. Players will be expected to have

knowledge of the first half of the Chapter G rules to play in the tournament. A mini tournament will run throughout the Thursday, and there will be similar minis throughout the weekend for later arrivals who cannot make the main tournament but would like a structured tournament setting. There'll be plenty of opportunities for friendly play for those who would prefer it, and Starter Kit mentoring sessions/refereeing for anyone interested in attending who is relatively new to the game.

**Contact:** For more details or to register contact Martin Mayers or Simon Staniforth by email at [boundingfirstfire@gmail.com](mailto:boundingfirstfire@gmail.com). For up to date information check out the web site at <https://boundingfireblackpool.blogspot.com/>.

## 2024 MARCH SCANDANAVIAN ASL OPEN

**When:** 28 February – 3 March.

**Where:** Danhostel Ishøj, Ishøj Strandvej 13, 2635 Ishøj, Denmark. Contact the organisers for information on accommodation; in 2020 accommodation was available at a cost ranging from 615 Danish Kroner (about €82) per person for a single room to 205 Danish Kroner (about €28) per person sharing a four person bedroom including breakfast, lunch and dinner – check the website or contact the organisers for a price.

**Fee:** Range from 1800 Danish Kroner (about €240) for those arriving Thursday morning to 700 Danish Kroner (€95) for those arriving on Saturday morning – check the website or contact the organisers for full information.

**Format:** The tournament is a five round Swiss style affair, running from Friday to Sunday with one or two days of optional friendly gaming Wednesday and Thursday.

**Contact:** Michael Hastrup-Leth, Toftthoejvej 14, 3650 Olstykke, Denmark, or email at [hastrupleth@gmail.com](mailto:hastrupleth@gmail.com). For the latest information visit the website at <http://www.asl-so.dk/>.

## HEROES 2024

**When:** 6 – 10 March.

**Where:** Headlands Hotel, 611 New South Promenade, Blackpool, England, FY4 1NJ. Tel 01253 341 179. Room rates start at £40.00 for a shared room or £45 for a single room and include breakfast. Bar meals and good beer are also available at the hotel.

**Fee:** £15.00 if registering with the organisers by 25 February, £20.00 thereafter and on the door (entry is free for those only able to attend for one day). In addition to a discount on the entry fee, players pre-registering will receive a tournament program in mid-February.

**Format:** Four round tournament beginning Friday morning, with three scenarios to choose from in each round. There will be an additional round on Friday afternoon if the number of participants warrants it. Players will be expected to have knowledge of the first half of the Chapter G rules to play in the tournament. Opportunities for CG and friendly games can also be found throughout the weekend. There will also be opportunities for new players to learn the game and friendly games available.

**Contact:** For more details or to register contact Pete Phillipps, 19 Main Street, Kirkliston, Scotland, EH29 9AE. Phone (1031) 629 1260 (evenings only) or email [if@vfft.co.uk](mailto:if@vfft.co.uk). For up to date information check out the UK *ASL* tournament web site at [www.vfft.co.uk](http://www.vfft.co.uk).

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# Bounding Fire Blackpool 2023 The Headlands Hotel November 15th - 19th

The scenarios to be used in the main tourney have been supplied by BFP, fully play tested, from upcoming releases .

The tournament will be run with 2 rounds on Friday, 2 rounds on Saturday and a Final on Sunday.

Time limits for play will be generous but also enforced to be fair to all participants.

Regular visitors to the existing Blackpool tournament, HEROES, will know our welcoming host Charles and his staff.

The venue offers a large gaming area with separate restaurant and bar.

The hotel is easily accessible from the M55 and the train station is a 10 minute walk away.

BFP have been a strong supporter of the ASL scene for many years and we gratefully acknowledge their support of this event. Further information on BFP and their products is available on their website: <http://www.boundingfire.com/>

## Contact Us

Do you have questions about the Tournament? Send us a message to [boundingfirstfire@gmail.com](mailto:boundingfirstfire@gmail.com), and we'll get back to you asap.

**Thank you for your interest.**